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VI.

REMINISCENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR.

THE history of the United States, as yet unwritten, will show the causes of the "Civil War" to have been in existence during the colonial era, and to have cropped out into full view in the debates of the several State assemblies on the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in which instrument Luther Martin, Patrick Henry, and others insisted they were implanted. African slavery, at the time, was universal, and its extinction in the North, as well as its extension in the South, was due to economic reasons alone. The first serious difficulty of the Federal Government arose from the attempt to lay an excise on distilled spirits. The second, from the hostility of New England traders to the policy of the Government in the War of 1812, by which their special interests were menaced, and there is now evidence to prove that, but for the expected peace, an attempt to disrupt the Union would then have been made. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was in reality a truce between antagonistic revenue systems—each seeking to gain the balance of power. For many years subsequently, slaves—as domestic servants—were taken to the Territories without exciting attention. The "Nullification" movement in South Carolina was entirely directed against the tariff. The slavery question was agitated from an early period, but failed to attract public attention for many years. At length, by unwearied industry, by ingeniously attaching itself to exciting questions of the day, with which it had no natural connection, it succeeded in making a lodgment in the public mind, which, like a subject exhausted by long effort, is exposed to the attack of some malignant fever, that, in a normal condition of vigor,

would have been resisted. Slavery was not the ultimate or proximate cause of the war, and Abolitionists are not justified in claiming the glory and spoils of the conflict, and in pluming themselves as "choosers of the slain." The vast immigration that poured into the country between the years 1844 and 1860 had a very important influence in directing the events of the latter year. The numbers were too great to be absorbed and assimilated by the native population. States in the West were controlled by German and Scandinavian voters, while the Irish took possession of the seaboard towns. Although it is true that the balance of party strength was not much affected by these naturalized voters, yet the modes of political thought were seriously disturbed, and a tendency was felt to transfer exciting topics from the domain of argument to that of violence. The aged and feeble President, Mr. Buchanan, unfitted for troublous times, was balloted to and fro by ambitious leaders of his own party, as was the last weak Hapsburg who reigned in Spain by the rival factions of France and Austria.

In January, 1861, the Assembly of Louisiana met. A member of the upper branch and chairman of its Committee on Federal Relations, I brought in and assisted in passing an act to call a convention of the people of the State to consider of matters beyond the competency of the Assembly. The convention met in March, and was presided over by ex-Governor and ex-United States Senator Alexandre Mouton—a man of pure and lofty character. I sat in the convention for my own parish, St. Charles, and was appointed chairman of the Military and Defense Committee. On behalf of the committee two ordinances were carried through; one to raise two regiments, one of artillery and one of infantry, enlistments for five years, unless sooner discharged—officers appointed by the Governor of the State after examination. More would have been desirable in the way of raising troops, but the temper of men's minds did not then justify the effort. The other ordinance authorized the Governor to use a million dollars for the purchase of arms and munitions. No such purchase was made, as the Governor was assured on all hands there was no danger of war, and the United States Arsenal at Baton Rouge, entirely in our power, would furnish more than we could need. It was vainly urged in reply that the stores of the arsenal were almost value-

less, the arms altered flint-lock muskets, and the accoutrements out of date. The current was too strong to stem. The convention adopted an ordinance declaring that Louisiana ceased to be a State within the Union, by an immense majority of votes, not more than five members dissenting. Indeed, similar action having already been taken or assured by South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas, it was a necessity for Louisiana to accompany her neighbors. At the time, and since, I marveled at the joyous and careless temper in which men, much my superiors in sagacity and experience, consummated these acts. There seemed to be such a general *gaiété de cœur*, as M. Olivier claimed for the imperial ministry when war was declared against Prussia. The attachment of the Northern and Western people to the Union, their superiority in numbers, in wealth, especially in mechanical resources, the command of the sea, the lust of rule and territory always felt by a democracy (a passion we fully shared in the South)—all these facts were laughed to scorn, or their mention was ascribed to timidity or treachery or both. As soon as the convention adjourned, finding myself out of harmony with prevailing opinion as to the certainty of war and necessity for preparation, I retired to my estate, determined to accept such responsibility only as came to me unsought. The inauguration of Lincoln, the confederation of South Carolina, Georgia, and the five Gulf States, the attitude of the border slave States hoping to mediate, the assembling of Confederate forces at Pensacola, Charleston, and other points, the seizure of United States forts and arsenals, the attack on Sumter, war—these followed with bewildering rapidity, and the human agencies concerned seemed as unconscious as scene-shifters in some awful tragedy.

I was drawn from my retreat by an invitation from General Bragg—a particular friend—to visit Pensacola, where he commanded the Southern forces, composed of volunteers from the adjacent States. Full of enthusiasm for their cause, and of the best material, officers and men were, with but few exceptions, without instruction, and the number of educated officers was, as in all the Southern armies, too limited to satisfy the imperious demands of the staff, much less those of the drill-master. Besides, the vicious system of election of officers and short term of

service struck at the very root of that stern discipline without which raw men cannot be converted into soldiers. The Confederate Government—then seated at Montgomery—resisted the enlistment of regiments for the war, preferring to engage them for twelve months. The same blindness smote the question of finance. Instead of laying taxes, which the general enthusiasm would have cheerfully endured, the Confederate authorities pledged their credit, and that, too, for an amount which might have implied a pact with Mr. Seward. Should war unhappily break out, its duration was to be strictly limited to sixty days. The effect of these cardinal errors was felt throughout the struggle.

General Bragg occupied Pensacola, the United States navy-yard, and Fort Barrancas, on the mainland. Fort Pickens, opposite the latter places, on Santa Rosa Island, was held by United States troops, commanded by Major Harvey Brown. Several United States war-vessels were anchored outside the harbor, with the understanding that no hostile movement should be made on either side without notice. Consequently, Bragg worked at his batteries, bearing on Pickens, while Brown strengthened with sand-bags and earthworks the weak landward bastion of his fort, and time was pleasantly passed by both parties in watching each other's occupations. Some months before, when Florida enforced her assumed right to exercise exclusive control over all points within her limits, some fifty United States artillerists, under Lieutenant Slemmer, were stationed at Barrancas, where they were harmless and helpless. After much manœuvring, the State forces of Florida induced Slemmer to retire from Barrancas to Pickens, then *garrisoned* by one ordnance sergeant and at the mercy of a corporal's guard in a row-boat. Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, was in a similar condition before Anderson retired to it with his company. The early seizure of these two fortresses would have spared the Confederates many serious embarrassments; but such small details were much neglected at that time.

My visit to Pensacola was brought to a close by information from the Governor of Louisiana of my appointment to the colonelcy of the Ninth Louisiana Infantry, a regiment just formed at camp, on the railway, some miles north of New Orleans, and under orders for Richmond. Accepting the appointment, I hast-

ened to the camp, inspected the command, ordered the lieutenant-colonel, Randolph (an uncommonly well-informed officer for the time), to move to Richmond by rail, *via* Chattanooga and Lynchburg, as rapidly as transportation was furnished, and went on to New Orleans, as well to procure equipment—in which the regiment was deficient—as to give some hours to private affairs. It was known there was a scarcity of small-arm ammunition, owing to the rapid concentration of troops there (in Virginia), and I was fortunate in obtaining, from the Louisiana authorities, one hundred thousand rounds, with which, together with some field equipment, I proceeded by express to Richmond. There I found my command, about a thousand strong, just arrived and preparing to go into camp at the Fair-grounds. The town was filled with rumor of battle away north, at Manassas, where Beauregard commanded the Confederate forces. A thousand wild reports, all equally inflamed, reached my ears while looking after the transportation of my ammunition, of which I did not wish to lose sight. Reaching camp, I paraded the regiment, stated the necessity for prompt action, and hoped it would approve an application to be sent immediately to the front. Officers and men were delighted with the prospect of active service, and largely condoned their inexperience by their zeal. Ammunition was served out, three days' rations ordered to be cooked for haversacks, and all camp-equipage, not absolutely essential, stored. These details attended to, at about 5 P. M. I reached the war-office, presided over by General L. P. Walker, of Alabama. When the object of my visit was stated, the secretary expressed much pleasure, as he was most anxious to send troops forward, but had few in readiness to move, owing to the lack of fixed ammunition, etc. As I had been in Richmond but a few hours, my desire, seconded by that of my men, to move, and adequately prepared so to do, gained me some "red-letter" marks at the war-office.

The secretary thought a train would be in readiness for me at nine that night. Accordingly, the regiment was marched to the station, where we remained several weary hours. At length, long after midnight, our train made its appearance. As the usual time to Manassas was some six hours, we confidently expected to arrive in the early forenoon. This expectation our engine

brought to grief. It proved a machine of the most wheezy and helpless character—creeping snail-like on levels, and requiring the men to leave the carriages to help it up grades. As the morning wore on, the sound of guns—reëchoed from the Blue Ridge Mountains on our left—became loud and constant. At every halt of the wretched engine the noise of battle grew more intense, as did our impatience. I hope, that day, the attention of the recording angel was engrossed in other directions. Later, we met men, single or in squads, some with arms, some without, moving south, in which quarter they all appeared to have pressing engagements. At dusk we gained “Manassas Junction,” near the field where on that day the battle of first Manassas or Bull Run had been fought and won. Bivouacking the men by the road-side, I sought through the darkness the headquarters of General Beauregard, to whom I was instructed to report. With much difficulty and delay the place was found, and a staff-officer told me orders would be sent the following morning. By these I was directed to select a suitable camp, thus indicating that no immediate movement was contemplated. The confusion that reigned about our camps for the next few days was extreme. Regiments seemed to have lost their colonels—colonels their regiments; men of all arms and all commands were mixed in the wildest way. A constant fusillade of small-arms and singing of bullets were kept up, indicative of a superfluity of disorder, if not of ammunition. One of my men was severely wounded in camp by one of these strays, and derived no comfort from my suggestion that it was a delicate attention of our comrades to mitigate the disappointment of coming too late for the battle. Things slowly got into a better condition. The elation of our people at their success was natural. They had achieved all and more than all that could have been expected of raw troops, and many commands had emulated veterans by their constancy and valor. Settled to the routine of camp-duty, I found many opportunities to go over the adjacent battle-field with those who had shared the action, then fresh in their memories. Once I had the great privilege of so doing in the company of Generals Johnston and Beauregard. I will now give my opinion of this action, as I purpose doing of such subsequent actions, and commanders therein, as came within the range of my personal experience during the war.

Although since the days of Nimrod war has been the constant occupation of men, the fingers of one hand suffice to number the great commanders. No "unlearned" people think of usurping Tyndall's place in the lecture-room, or of taking his cuneiform bricks from Rawlinson; yet the world has been much more prolific of learned scientists and philologists than of able generals. Notwithstanding, the average American, and, judging from the dictatorship of Maitre Gambetta, the Frenchman, would not have hesitated to supersede Napoleon at Austerlitz, or Nelson at Trafalgar. True, Cleon captured the Spartan garrison, and Narses gained victories. So did Bunyan write the "Pilgrim's Progress;" but pestilent demagogues and mutilated guardians of Eastern zenanas have not always been successful in war, nor the great and useful profession of tinkers written allegory. As men without knowledge have in all times usurped the right to criticise the conduct of commanders and campaigns, they will doubtless continue, despite the protests of professional soldiers, who discharge this duty in a reverent spirit, knowing that the greatest is he "who commits the fewest blunders." General McDowell, the Federal commander at Manassas, and a trained soldier of unusual acquirements, was so hounded and worried by ignorant and impatient politicians and newspapers, as to be scarcely responsible for his acts. This may be said of all the commanders in the beginning of the war—notably of the Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston—whose early loss on the field of Shiloh was irreparable, and, mayhap, determined the fate of the South. McDowell's plan of battle was excellent, and its execution by his mob no worse than might have been confidently expected. The late Governor Andrew, of Massachusetts, observed that his men thought they were going to a town-meeting. This is exhaustive criticism. With soldiers at his disposal, McDowell would have succeeded in turning and overwhelming Beauregard's left, driving him from his rail communications with Richmond, and preventing the junction of Johnston from the Valley. It appears that Beauregard was, to some extent, surprised by the attack, contemplating movements by his centre and right. His exposed and weak left, however, stubbornly resisted the shock of the opposing masses. Beauregard, whose personal daring and coolness were most inspiring,

brought up assistance from the centre and right, and the ground was held until Johnston, who had skillfully eluded Patterson, arrived, and began feeding the fight with his people, when the affair was soon decided. There can be little question that, with a strong brigade of soldiers, Johnston could have gone to Washington and Baltimore. Whether, with his means, he should have advanced has been too much and angrily discussed already. Napoleon held that, no matter what the confusion and exhaustion of a victorious army, a defeated one was a hundred-fold worse, and action should be based on this. Assuredly, if there be justification in disregarding an axiom of Napoleon, the wild confusion of the Confederates after Manassas, to which I have alluded, would afford it. The first skirmishes and actions of the war showed that, untrained, the Southron was a better fighter than the Northerner, not because of more courage, but of the social and economic conditions by which he was surrounded. Devoted to agriculture, in a sparsely-populated country, the Southron was self-reliant, a practised horseman, and skilled in the use of arms. The denser population of the North, the habit of association for commercial and manufacturing purposes, weakened individuality of character; and horsemanship and the use of arms were exceptional accomplishments. The rapid development of railways and manufactures in the West had assimilated the people of that region to their Eastern neighbors, and the old race of frontier riflemen had wandered to the far interior of the continent.

Instruction and discipline soon equalized differences, and battles were decided by generalship and numbers. This was the experience of our kinsmen in their great civil war. The country squires who followed the banners of Newcastle and Rupert at first swept the eastern counties yeomanry and the London trainbands from the field; but fiery and impetuous valor was at last overmatched by the disciplined purpose and stubborn constancy of Cromwell's Ironsides. The value of the "initiative" in war cannot be overstated. It surpasses in power mere accession of numbers, as it requires no transport nor commissariat. Holding it, a commander lays his plans deliberately, and executes them at his own appointed time and in his own way. The "defensive" is weak, lowering the *morale* of the army reduced to it, enforcing constant watchfulness lest threatened

attacks become real, and keeping commander and troops in a state of anxious tension. These truisms would not deserve mention did not the public mind ignore the fact that their application is strictly limited to trained soldiers, and often become impatient for the employment of proved ability to sustain sieges and hold lines in offensive movements. A collection of untrained men is neither more nor less than a mob in which individual courage goes for nothing. In movement, each person finds his liberty of action merged in a crowd without instruction and incapable of direction. Every obstacle creates confusion—speedily converted into panic—by opposition. The heroic defenders of Saragossa could not, for a moment, have faced a battalion of French infantry in the open field.

Osman's solitary attempt to operate outside of Plevna met with no success, and the recent defeat of Mukhtar may be ascribed to incaution in taking position too far from his line of defense, where attacked, manœuvres, of which his people were incapable, became necessary. After the action at Manassas, the summer and winter wore away without movements of special note in our quarter, excepting the defeat of the Federals at Ball's Bluff, by a detached brigade of Confederates, under the command of General Evans, of South Carolina—a West-Pointer enjoying the *sobriquet* of "Shanks," from the thinness of his legs—and the *original* reconniassance of the Federal General Schenck, on the line and in the carriages of the Hampshire & Loudon Railway. In the organization of the army my regiment was brigaded with the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Regiments of Louisiana Infantry, and placed under the command of Brigadier W. H. T. Walker, of Georgia. Graduated from West Point in the summer of 1837, this officer joined the Sixth Regiment of United States Infantry operating against the Seminoles in Florida. On Christmas-day following was fought the battle of Okechobee, the severest fight of that Indian war. The savages were posted on a thickly-jungled island in the lake—through the waters of which, breast-high, the troops advanced several hundred yards to the attack. The loss on our side was heavy, but the Indians were so completely routed as to break their spirit. Colonel Zachary Taylor commanded, and there won his yellow sash and grade. Walker was so desperately wounded that the

medical people gave him up. He laughed at their predictions, and recovered. In the Mexican War, assaulting Molino del Rey, he received several wounds, all pronounced fatal, and science thought it was avenged. He got well again, as he said, to spite the doctors. All his life he was a martyr to asthma, and rarely enjoyed sleep but in a sitting posture; yet he was as cheerful and full of restless activity as the celebrated Earl of Peterborough. After the peace with Mexico, Walker was commandant of cadets at West Point. His ability as an instructor and his lofty martial bearing deeply impressed his new brigade, and prepared it for the stern work before it. Subsequently, Walker died on the field near Atlanta, defending the soil of his native state—a death of all others he would have chosen. I have dwelt somewhat on his character because it was one of the strangest I have met. No enterprise was too rash to awaken his ardor if it necessitated daring courage and self-devotion. Truly he might have come forth out of the pages of old Froissart. It is with unaffected feeling I recall his memory, and hang before it my humble wreath of “immortelles.”

In camp our army experienced much suffering and loss of strength. Drawn almost exclusively from rural districts, where families lived isolated, the men were scourged with mumps, whooping-cough, and measles, diseases which in urban populations are readily overcome by childhood. Measles proved as virulent as small-pox or cholera. Sudden changes of temperature drove the eruption from the surface to the internal organs, and fevers—lung and typhoid—and dysenteries followed. My regiment was fearfully smitten, and I passed many days in hospital, nursing the sick, and trying to comfort the last moments of many poor lads, dying so far from home and friends. Time and frequent changes of camp brought improvement, but my own health gave way. A persistent, low fever sapped my strength, and impaired the use of my limbs. General Johnston kindly ordered me off to the Fauquier Springs—sulphur-waters—some twenty miles to the south. There I was joined and carefully nursed by a devoted sister, and, after some weeks, slowly regained health and strength. On the eve of returning to the army I learned of my promotion to brigadier, to relieve General Walker, transferred to the command of Georgia troops. This

promotion seriously embarrassed me. Of the four colonels, whose regiments constituted the brigade, I was the junior in commission, and the other three had been present and "won their spurs" at the late battle, so far the only important one of the war. Besides, my known friendship for President Davis, with whom, by his first marriage with my elder sister, I was nearly connected, would justify the opinion that my promotion was due to favoritism. Arrived at headquarters, I obtained leave to go to Richmond, where, after an affectionate reception, the President listened to the story of my feelings, the reasons on which they were based, and the request that the promotion be revoked. He replied that he would take a day for reflection before deciding the matter. The following day I was told the answer to my appeal would be forwarded to the army, to which I immediately returned. The President had employed the delay in writing a letter to the senior officers of the brigade. He began by stating that promotions to the grade of general officers were intrusted to him, and were made for considerations of public good, of which he alone was judge. He then, out of abundant kindness for me, went on to soothe the feelings of these officers with a tenderness and delicacy of touch worthy a woman's hand, and so effectually as to secure me the hearty support of these patriots and soldiers, many of whom attained eminence in the war. No wonder that all who enjoy the friendship of Jefferson Davis love him as Jonathan did David. Several weeks, without notable incident, were devoted to instruction, especially in marching, the only military virtue for which Southern troops had no aptitude. Owing to the good traditions left by my predecessor in command, Walker, and the zeal of officers and men, great progress was made, and all the credit for the proficiency of the brigade was given me. In the army at this time was a battalion of three companies from Louisiana, commanded by Major Wheat. These detached companies had been thrown together previous to the fight at Manassas, where Wheat was severely wounded. The strongest of the three, and giving character to all, was called the "Tigers." Recruited on the levée and in the alleys of New Orleans, the men might have come out of "Alsatia," where they would have been worthy subjects of that illustrious potentate "Duke Hildebrod." The captain, who had suc-

ceeded to the immediate command of these worthies on the advancement of Wheat, enjoying the luxury of many *aliases*, called himself "White," perhaps out of respect to the purity of the patriotic garb lately assumed. So villainous was the reputation achieved by the battalion that every commander desired to be rid of it. At last, General Johnston assigned it to me, despite my efforts to decline the honor of such society. He promised, however, that I should be sustained in any measures to enforce discipline, and but a few hours elapsed before the fulfillment of the promise was required. For some disorder after "tattoo," several of the "Tigers" were arrested, and placed under the "brigade-guard." Their comrades attempted to force the "guard" and release them. This attempt failed, and the two ringleaders were captured and put in irons for the night. Next morning an order for a general court-martial was obtained from army headquarters. The court met at 10 A. M. the same day. As there was no doubt of the facts, a finding was speedily reached—the prisoners to be shot—time fixed by brigade-commander. I selected sunset, and directed the "firing-party" to be detailed from the prisoners' company. Major Wheat and his officers begged to be spared this hard duty, fearing the "Tigers" would refuse to fire on their comrades. I insisted, for the sake of the example, and pointed out the fatal consequences of any disobedience on the part of their men. The brigade, under arms, was marched out, and, as the news had spread, many thousands from other commands flocked to witness the scene. The firing-party, ten "Tigers," was drawn up fifteen paces from the prisoners, the brigade-provost gave the command to fire, and the unhappy men fell dead without a struggle. This account is given, because it was the first military execution in the "Army of Northern Virginia," and the punishment, so closely following the offense, produced a marked effect. The "Tigers" gave no further trouble, and proved hardy, excellent soldiers.

Major Robert Wheat deserves a more extended notice, and to furnish it some anticipation of events is necessary. In the early summer of 1846—after the first actions of the war with Mexico, Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—the United States army, under General Zachary Taylor, lay near the town of Matamoras. Visiting the hospital of a recently joined vol-

unteeer corps from the States, I remarked a beautiful, bright-eyed boy of some eighteen years, down with disease, but cheery withal. The interest he inspired led to his removal to army headquarters, where he soon recovered health and became a pet. This was Robert Wheat, son of an Episcopal clergyman, from the old town of Alexandria, on the Potomac, who had run away from school to come to the war. He next went to Cuba with Lopez, was wounded and captured, but escaped the *garrote* to follow Walker to Nicaragua. Exhausting the capacities of South American patriots to *pronounce*, he quitted their society in disgust, and joined Garibaldi in Italy, whence his keen scent of combat summoned him home in convenient time to receive a bullet at Manassas. The most complete "Dugald Dalgetty" possible, he had all the "defects of the good qualities" of that doughty warrior. Some months after the time of which I am now writing, a body of horse was captured in the Valley of Virginia. The colonel commanding, who had been dismounted in the fray, approached me—a stalwart man, with huge mustaches, cavalry-boots adorned with spurs worthy of a *caballero*, slouched hat, and plume. He strode along with the nonchalant air of one who had wooed Dame Fortune too long to be cast down by her frowns. Suddenly, Major Wheat, near by, sprang from his horse with a cry of "Percy! old boy!" "Why, Bob?" was echoed back, and a warm embrace was exchanged. Colonel Percy Windham, an Englishman in the Federal service, had last parted from Wheat in Italy, or some other country where the pleasant business of "killing" was going on, and now fraternized with his friend in the manner described. Poor Wheat! A month later, and he slept his last sleep on the bloody field of Cold Harbor. He lies there in a soldier's grave. Gallant spirit! Let us hope that his readiness to die for his cause has made "the scarlet of his sins like unto wool."

As the autumn of the year (1861) passed away, the question of army organization pressed for solution. Divergent opinions were held by the Government at Richmond and Generals Johnston and Beauregard. The former sent me to President Davis to explain his views and urge their adoption. My mission met with no success; but, in discharging it, I was made aware of the estrangement growing up between these eminent persons, which

subsequently became "the spring of woes unnumbered." An earnest effort made by me to remove the cloud, then no "greater than a man's hand," failed, though the elevation of character of the two men, which made them listen patiently to my appeals, justified hope. Time but served to widen the breach. Without the knowledge and despite the wishes of General Johnston, the descendants of the ancient dwellers in the cave of Adullam gathered themselves behind his shield and shot their arrows at President Davis and his advisers—weakening the influence of the head of the cause for which all were struggling. Immediately after the birth of the Confederacy, a resolution was adopted by the "Provisional Congress," declaring that military and naval officers resigning the service of the United States Government, to enter that of the Confederate, would preserve their rank. Later on, the President was authorized to make five appointments to the grade of general. These appointments were announced after the action at Manassas, and in the following order of seniority: Samuel Cooper, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and G. T. Beauregard. Near the close of President Buchanan's Administration, in 1860, died General Jessup, the Quartermaster-General of the United States Army, and Joseph E. Johnston, then lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, was appointed to the vacancy. Now, the Quartermaster-General of the United States Army had the rank, pay, and emoluments of a brigadier-general; but the rank was staff, and by law this officer could exercise no command over troops unless by special assignment of his government. When in the spring of 1861 the officers in question offered their services to the Confederacy, Cooper was adjutant-general, United States Army—rank of colonel; Albert Sidney Johnston, colonel, brigadier-general by brevet, and on duty as such; Lee, lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, senior to Joseph E. Johnston in the line before the latter's appointment above mentioned; Beauregard, major of engineers. President Davis held to the superiority of line to staff rank in arranging the order of seniority of generals. General Joseph E. Johnston took the opposite view, and sincerely believed that injustice was done him. After the grave and wondrous scenes through which we have passed, all this seems like "a tempest in a teapot," but it had much influence at the time, and deserves attention. Gen-

eral Johnston has published his account of the war, and it is understood that Mr. Davis has a volume in press; and such of the public as may feel an interest in the subject will doubtless find all the facts presented. General Beauregard, who about this time was transferred to the Army of the West, commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston, was also known to have grievances. Whatever their source, it could not have been *rank*, as this did not affect his position; but it is due to this general, a true patriot and gentleman of excellent taste, to say that no utterances came from him. Indiscreet persons at Richmond claiming the privilege, and discharging the duties of friendship, gave tongue to loud and frequent complaints, and much increased the confusion of the hour.

As the year 1862 opened, and the time for active movements drew near, weighty cares attended the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. The folly of accepting forces for the short period of twelve months, to which allusion has already been made, was now apparent. Taking service in the spring of 1861, the time of most of the troops would expire just as the Federal host in their front might be expected to advance. A large majority of the men were willing and anxious to reënlist provided they could first go home to arrange private affairs. Fortunately, the fearful condition of the country permitted the granting of furloughs on a large scale. Excepting on a few pikes, movements were impossible, and an army could no more have marched across-country than across New York Bay. Closet warriors, in cozy studies, with smooth McAdam roadways before their doors, sneer at the idea of military movements being arrested by mud. I apprehend these gentlemen have never served in a bad country during the rainy season, and are ignorant of the fact that in his Russian campaign the elements proved too strong for the genius of Napoleon. General Johnston met the difficulties of his position with great coolness, tact, and judgment, but his burden was by no means lightened by the interference of certain politicians at Richmond. These gentlemen were perhaps inflamed by the success that had attended the tactical efforts of their Washington peers. At all events, they now threw themselves upon military questions with much ardor. The leader was Mr. Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, Vice-President of the Confederacy, who is entitled to a place by himself. Like the celebrated

John Randolph, of Roanoke, he has an acute intellect attached to a frail and meagre body. As was said by the witty Dean of St. Paul's of Francis Jeffrey, his mind is in a state of indecent exposure. A trained and skillful politician, he was for many years before the war returned to the United States House of Representatives from the district in which he resides, and his "device" seems always to have been "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*"

"When, in December, 1849, the Congress of the United States assembled, there was a Whig Administration, and the same party had a very small majority in the Lower House. Mr. Stephens was an ardent Whig, and a member of the House; but he could not see his way to support his party candidate for Speaker, and this inability to find a road—plain, mayhap, to weaker organs—secured the control of the House to his political rivals. During the excited period just preceding "secession" Mr. Stephens held and avowed wise and moderate opinions; but, swept along by the resistless torrent surrounding him, he discovered and proclaimed the fact that "slavery was the corner-stone of the Confederacy." Granting the truth of this, which is by no means admitted here, it was, in the strong vernacular of the West, "rather piling the agony" on the humanitarians, whose sympathies were not much quickened toward us thereby. As the struggle progressed, Mr. Stephens, with all the impartiality of an equity judge, marked many of the virtues of the Government north of the Potomac, and all the vices of that on his own side of the stream. Regarding the military questions in hand, he entertained, and publicly expressed, original opinions which I will attempt to convey as accurately as possible. The war was for principles and rights. It was in the defense of these and of their property that the people had taken up arms. They could always be relied upon when a battle was imminent; but when there was no fighting to be done they had best be at home attending to their families and interests. As their intelligence was equal to their patriotism, they were as capable of judging of the necessity of their presence with the "colors" as the commanders of armies, who were but professional soldiers, fighting for rank and pay—most of them without property in the South. It may be observed that such opinions are more comfortably cherished by po-

litical gentlemen—two hundred miles away—than by commanders immediately in front of an enemy.

At the close of the great war, in July, 1865, I visited Washington, in the sole hope of effecting some change in the condition of Jefferson Davis—then ill and a prisoner at Fortress Monroe. Mr. Stephens happened to visit Washington at the same time, and was the object of much attention on the part of people controlling the Congress and country. Desiring his coöperation, I sought and found him, sitting near a fire, for he is of a chilly nature, smoking his pipe. He heard me in severe politeness, and, without unnecessary expenditure of enthusiasm, promised his assistance. Since the war Mr. Stephens has again been, and is now, a Representative in Congress. He has the satisfaction to know that, unlike the “rebel brigadiers,” his presence is not a rock of offense to the loyal mind. No gallery of portraits, however humble, but should include that of this eminent person, who, for a quarter of a century, has filled an important place in the councils of his country. Pursuing “the even tenor of his way,” Johnston rapidly increased the efficiency of his army. Furloughed men returned in large numbers, and before their “leaves” had terminated, many bringing new recruits with them. Divisions were formed, and officers selected to command them. Some islands of dry land appeared amid the sea of mud, when the movement of the Federal forces in our front changed the theatre of war, and opened the important campaign of 1862.

When overtaken by unexpected calamity, African tribes destroy the idol previously worshiped, and, with much noise, seek some new “fetich,” in which they can incarnate their vanities and hopes. Stunned by the rout of Manassas, the North pulled down a great old veteran, Scott, and his lieutenant, McDowell, and set up McClellan, who caught the public eye at the moment by reason of some minor successes in Western Virginia, where the Confederate commander, General Robert Garnett, a promising officer, was killed. It is but fair to admit that the South had not emulated the wisdom of Solomon nor the modesty of Godolphin. The capture of Fort Sumter, with its garrison of fifty-six men, was hardly Austerlitz, yet it would put the grandiloquent *hidalgos* of Spain on their mettle to make more clatter over the downfall of the Cross of St. George from Gib-

raltar. McClellan was "the young Napoleon"—the very god of war, in his latest avatar. While this was absurd, and in the end injurious to McClellan, it was a service to his Government, for it strengthened his loins to the task before him—a task demanding the highest order of ability, and requiring the influence of a demigod. A great war was to be carried on, and a great army, the most complex of machines, was necessary. The cardinal principles on which the art of war is based are few and unchangeable—resembling in this the code of morality; but their application varies as the theatre of the war, the genius and temper of the people engaged, and the kind of arms employed. The United States had never possessed a great army. The entire force engaged in the war against Mexico would scarcely have made a respectable *corps d'armée*, and, to study the organization of great armies and campaigns, a recurrence to the "Napoleonic era" was necessary. The governments of Europe had, for a half-century, been engaged in improving armaments, and changing the tactical unit of formation and manœuvre to correspond to such improvement. The Italian campaign of the third Napoleon established some advance in field-artillery, but the supreme importance of "breech-loaders" was not admitted until "Sadowa," in 1866. All this must be considered in determining the value of McClellan's work. Taking the raw material intrusted to him, he converted it into a great military machine, complete in all its parts, fitted for its intended purpose. Moreover, he resisted the natural impatience of his Government and people, and the follies of politicians and newspapers, and for months refused to put his machine at work before all its delicate adjustments were perfected. Thus, much to its own despite, the North obtained armies and the foundation of success. The correctness of the system adopted by McClellan proved equal to all emergencies, and remained unchanged until the close of the war. Disappointed in his hands, and suffering painful defeats in those of his immediate successors, the "Army of the Potomac," always recovered, showed itself a vital organism, and finally triumphed. McClellan organized victory for his section, and those who deem the preservation of the "Union" the first of earthly duties, and, judging from their readiness to violate the "commandments," of heavenly also, should not cease to do him reverence. I have here

spoken of McClellan not as a leader, but as an organizer, of armies; as such he deserves to rank with the Von Moltkes, Scharnhorsts, and Louvois, of the Old World. The constant struggle against the fatal interference of politicians with his military plans and duties separated McClellan from the civil department of his Government, and led him to adopt a policy of his own. The military road to Richmond, and the only one, as events proved, was by the Peninsula and the James River, and it was his duty so to advise. He insisted, and had his way, but not for long. A little of that selfishness, which serves lower intelligences as an instinct of self-preservation, would have shown him that his most dangerous enemies were not in his front. The Administration at Washington had to deal with a people blind with rage, an ignorant and meddlesome Congress, and a wolfish horde of place-hunters. A sudden dash of the Confederates on the capital might change the attitude of foreign powers. These political considerations weighed heavily at the seat of government, but were of small moment to the military commander. In a conflict between civil policy and military strategy, the latter must yield. The jealousy manifested by the Venetian and Dutch Republics toward their commanders has often been criticised; but it should be remembered that they kept the military in strict subjection to the civil power, and, when they were overthrown, it was by foreign invasion, not by military usurpation. Their annals afford no example of the declaration by their generals that the special purpose of republican armies is to preserve civil order and enforce civil law.

After the battle of Chickamauga, in 1863, General Grant was promoted to the command of the armies of the United States, and called to Washington. In a conference at the war-office between him, President Lincoln, and Secretary Stanton, the approaching campaign in Virginia was discussed. Grant said the advance on Richmond should be made by the James River. It was replied that the Government required the interposition of an army between Lee and Washington, and would not consent, at that late day, to the adoption of a plan that would be taken by the public as a confession of previous error. Grant observed he was indifferent as to routes, but if the Government preferred its own—so often tried—to the one he suggested, it

must be prepared for the additional loss of a hundred thousand men. The men were promised, Grant accepted the governmental plan of campaign, and was supported to the end. The above came to me well authenticated, and I have no doubt of its correctness. During his operations in the Peninsula and near Richmond, General McClellan complained much of the want of support. I think the constancy with which President Lincoln adhered to him was, under the circumstances, surprising. He had drifted away from the dominant Washington sentiment, and alienated the sympathies of his Government. His fall was inevitable—the affections of the army but hastened it. Even victory could not save him. He fell into the habit of saying, “My army,” “My soldiers.” Such phraseology may be used by a Frederick or a Napoleon—sovereigns as well as generals—but officers command the armies of their governments. General McClellan is an upright, patriotic man, incapable of wrongdoing. He has a high standard of morality, and lives closer to it than most men do to a lower one; but it is to be remembered that the examples of the good are temptations and opportunities to the unscrupulous. The habit of thought underlying such language, or soon engendered by its use, has made Mexico and the South American republics the wonder and scorn of civilization. The foregoing account of McClellan’s fall, and the causes thereof, is deemed pertinent, because he was the central figure in the Northern field, and laid the foundation of Northern success. Above all, he, and a gallant band of officers supporting him, impressed a generous, chivalric spirit on the conduct of the war, which soon faded away after his downfall; and the future historian, in recounting some later operations, will doubt if he is dealing with campaigns of generals or expeditions of brigands. I have now reached a point at which the great campaign of 1862 opens to view, and a continuation of my “reminiscences” will tell the story of my connection with it.

RICHARD TAYLOR.